

RESOLUTION NO. 20181115-041

WHEREAS, clean, safe drinking water is foundational to our city's public health and safety, to the public peace and order, and to our local economy; and

WHEREAS, in mid-October regional heavy rains and flooding upstream from Austin resulted in extraordinarily high levels of turbidity in the Austin Water Utility's water supply, causing the city's drinking water to exceed Texas Commission on Environmental Quality standards and temporarily rendering the city's drinking water potentially unfit for safe consumption; and

WHEREAS, Austin Water issued a boil water notice on October 22 and lifted the notice on October 28, while restricting outdoor watering and urging customers to limit their water use; and

WHEREAS, City Staff at Austin Water and the City Manager's office, as well as all of our Emergency Operations Command partners, worked tirelessly around the clock to get clean drinking water back to our residents and businesses during this unprecedented water service disruption; and

WHEREAS, effective and cohesive communications in the early hours and days of any crisis are critical in order to avoid confusion, expense, and possible health risks for Austin Water customers; and

WHEREAS, the tremendous effect of this crisis has been felt across our community, including but not limited to renters, homeowners, senior housing, schools, hospitals, and businesses; and

WHEREAS, in an effort to be responsive and transparent to the residents of Austin, the Council asks for an open dialogue to examine what led to the city's boil

water crisis, an analysis of the City's response, and what we can do to respond and recover more quickly should a similar event occur in the future; and

WHEREAS, in a memo titled, Next Steps Regarding 2018-10-16 Flooding Event, dated October 28, 2018, the City Manager reports that, with any significant emergency when the Emergency Operations Center is activated, the City Manager prepares an After Action Report and a Corrective Action Plan; and

WHEREAS, we would expect that the City Manager would fully assess all such significant events and report back to Council and the community, even without Council action; and

WHEREAS, in the October 28th, 2018 memo the City Manager indicated the intent to discuss the After Action Report and Austin Water's in-depth review of its operations at the most recent and also at future council work sessions to report to Council; and

WHEREAS, at the November 13, 2018 council work session, the City Manager continued his reporting to Council with presentation of the boil water notification timeline as outlined in the November 9, 2018 memo titled, "October Boil Water Notification Timeline;" **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Council supports the City Manager's and Austin Water's commitment to fully assess the event and identify areas of improvement, by way of an "After Action Report," and further directs the City Manager to provide a preliminary report and public briefing to the City Council, no later than December 11, 2018, providing information detailing the events leading up to and through the water boil disaster, including but not limited to:

- an overview of Austin's water treatment facilities' ages, conditions, output capacities, water treatment technologies, why these technologies were chosen during planning and construction, and how we may update these technologies to address future needs; and
- a timeline detailing the foreseeability of the water turbidity issue, Austin Water's knowledge and response to the crisis, as well as when and how the decision to boil water was communicated to residential and commercial customers (this is to include insight into the interim decisions about increased water restrictions and the final decision and communication about ceasing the boil water notice); and
- a detailed account of water quality data as a result of the boil water crisis between October 22 and October 28, including turbidity, bacteria testing and results, and other relevant water quality data; and
- comparative data on turbidity levels experienced in the last ten (10) years with analysis of how this October's spike compared to previous periods of high turbidity outliers; and
- analysis of whether the introduction of zebra mussels may have contributed to the ability of our water treatment infrastructure to process turbid water; and
- an overview of intergovernmental cooperation and communications throughout the crisis; and
- a forecast of the future of Austin's water planning and supply.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

In order to improve our communications in times of emergency, the City Manager should:

- Acknowledge any gaps in City communications, and initial plans for bridging those gaps in the future; and
- Ensure cohesive messaging from partner agencies; and
- Identify segments of the population and economy that are most greatly impacted by a loss of readily available clean water supply, and affirmatively

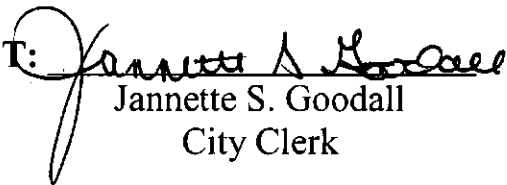
provide those with consistent, specifically targeted and dedicated information and guidance.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Council renews its commitment to: create a water supply system that is resilient to extreme drought, flooding events, and regional population growth; prioritize development and implementation of the Water Forward Plan and the Austin Water 2020 Strategic Plan; and continue to prioritize support for essential and effective capital investments to providing clean and safe drinking water for our growing city and region.

ADOPTED: November 15, 2018

ATTEST:


Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk